

## COMMUNICATION WORKERS UNION WELCOMES HOUSE OF COMMONS REPORT ON ‘CONTROLLING DANGEROUS DOGS’

The Communication Workers Union which represents the largest number of Dog Attack Victims in the UK has today welcome the House of Commons Environment, Food and Rural Affairs Select Committee’s Report on ‘**Controlling dangerous dogs**’.

**3000 Postal Workers are attacked by dogs and injured every year whilst delivering mail and parcels, some savagely injured and disabled and forced into medical retirement.**

**CWU National Health and Safety Officer Dave Joyce** who spearheads the Union’s “Bite-Back” campaign that successfully won significant changes to the UK’s Dangerous Dogs Laws in 2014, extending the law to private property in order to protect Postal Workers, gave extensive oral and written evidence to the Commons Select Committee.

**Dave Joyce said:** “The CWU very much welcomes and commends the EFRA Select Committee report and the Government must now stop ducking the issue and living in denial of the facts that confront society in the UK with dangerous dogs, which is problem spiralling out of control.”

“The Government should now accept the EFRA Select Committee’s recommendations in full and get to work without delay in putting the report into action and into Law”

“As the Select Committee states, the Government’s current approach to dog control is failing to protect people and in particular it’s failing postal workers with 3000 attacked by dogs every year”.

“With 23,000 Police Officers cut from the UK’s forces since 2009 and Local Authority cuts leading to the disappearance of Dog Wardens, it’s not surprising that Dog Control has slipped down the priority list.”

“As the Select Committee recommends, there needs to be increased support for local authorities and police forces to ensure they have the capacity to fulfil their duties and the CWU is of the view that government should look at Dog Licensing in order to assist in that regard”

“Hospital admissions for dog attacks have increased by 81 percent since 2005 and is costing the Taxpayer £Millions and £Millions on top of the personal tragedies, pain and suffering. And yet the government stands by whilst those responsible, the irresponsible dog owners walk away without paying a penny!”

“There is an unacceptably high number of postal workers who are victims as well as children and members of the public, who suffer horrific life-changing injuries in these incidents as well as psychological distress and the government needs to wake up to the facts and act now. This can’t go on!”

“The issue of Breed Specific Legislation is a diversion away from the real problem of irresponsible owners. Postal Workers get attacked by every breed and sundry and banning certain breeds has achieved nothing. Any breed can be aggressive if it’s basic needs, care, welfare, wellbeing, training and socialisation is ignored. The problem is on the other end of the lead and many of these people should never be dog owners. The Government needs to focus on dealing with that problem.”

“Section 10 of the Dangerous Dogs Act which is causing confusion in the Courts must be addressed and the 20 pieces of various Dog Law currently on the statute books needs to be reviewed and consolidated into an easily understood law. As the Select committee concluded – the present approach to dog control is plagued with deep structural problems.”

“The government need to endorse the Select Committee’s key recommendation to ‘commission a comprehensive review of existing dog control legislation and policy’, with a view to focus on prevention, early intervention, and consistently robust sanctions for offenders’ – that’s essential.”

“The CWU wants to see effective preventative measures introduced, one of which is ‘Dog Control Notices’ which can be served on Dog Owners imposing legally enforceable requirements to train and control their animals and so avoid attacks, with legal sanctions for non-compliance.”

“The CWU also wants to see consistency from the Courts with full range of penalties, sentences and ancillary order fully utilised which we don’t see presently. Prison Sentences and Unlimited Fines are available for aggravated offences but these are rarely used. Courts have been reminded that they must consider compensation in all cases where personal injury occurs but this doesn’t always happen.”

“Dog ownership disqualification is another order which is under-used by Courts and despite the Sentencing Guidelines requiring the Court to make a destruction order where the dog is a danger to public safety this rarely happens and a contingent destruction order is instead handed down which is breached in many cases.”

“The CWU also supports the recommendations on mandatory training and education courses for minor dog offences, similar to speed awareness courses for drivers as well as wider dog awareness training for schoolchildren, and run a targeted awareness campaign for dog owners and the general public on safe human-dog interaction.”